
Name of Organization: Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District

Type of Organization: Sub-state or Special Purpose District

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Project Title: Mercury in Schools Cleans Sweep

Project Category: Pollution Prevention and Reduction - BNS

Rank by Organization (if applicable): 0

Total Funding Requested (\$): 21,860 **Project Duration:** 1 Years

Abstract:

The Mercury in Schools Clean Sweep would remove mercury and mercury-containing devices from schools in the area served by the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (District) at no cost to the school. Collected items would include bulk elemental mercury, laboratory thermometers, barometers, fever thermometers, and blood pressure gauges. To overcome reluctance to replace familiar and effective equipment, the District would offer a cash reward (in the form of a voucher) in proportion to the number of devices collected. The mercury would be recycled or permanently disposed.

Geographic Areas Affected by the Project

States:

<input type="checkbox"/> Illinois	<input type="checkbox"/> New York
<input type="checkbox"/> Indiana	<input type="checkbox"/> Pennsylvania
<input type="checkbox"/> Michigan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wisconsin
<input type="checkbox"/> Minnesota	<input type="checkbox"/> Ohio

Lakes:

<input type="checkbox"/> Superior	<input type="checkbox"/> Erie
<input type="checkbox"/> Huron	<input type="checkbox"/> Ontario
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Michigan	<input type="checkbox"/> All Lakes

Geographic Initiatives:

☐ Greater Chicago ☐ NE Ohio ☐ NW Indiana ☐ SE Michigan ☐ Lake St. Clair

Primary Affected Area of Concern: Milwaukee Estuary, WI

Other Affected Areas of Concern:

For Habitat Projects Only:

Primary Affected Biodiversity Investment Area:

Other Affected Biodiversity Investment Areas:

Problem Statement:

Mercury is a persistent bioaccumulating toxic pollutant. In fish, wildlife, and humans, mercury is a developmental and degenerative neuro-toxin. Despite these characteristics, mercury continues to be used in schools. Schools need to be sensitive to mercury issues now because mercury spills occurred in several schools throughout the country in 1999. These spills were disruptive - some schools were closed for two days. Also, cleaning a school is expensive. For a recent spill in Green Bay, Wisconsin, costs have exceeded \$250,000. Finally, to promote student and staff health, schools should be making every effort to avoid exposing students and staff to mercury.

In schools, mercury is present in thermometers and pressure gauges. In addition, some teachers continue to use bulk elemental mercury in demonstrations that display mercury's unique properties. Although alternatives are available, several factors prevent elimination of mercury and mercury-containing devices. The equipment with mercury is familiar, effective, reliable, and accurate. Also, the harm caused by mercury is not immediate but chronic. Even if a desire to eliminate mercury is present, funding for replacements is often unavailable.

Proposed Work Outcome:

The District would pay for the collection and recycling of mercury and mercury-containing devices from schools. Also, the District would pay a reward (in the form of vouchers) to schools in proportion to the number of devices collected.

The District would establish several collection days during which a District contractor would travel from school to school. Schools would request a visit on a particular day. Visits would be concentrated on high schools. Other schools could self-transport their materials to a high school for collection. A District contractor would consolidate the collected materials and ship them to a recycler or a site of permanent geological disposal.

The outcome will be safer, healthier schools. The risk of a disruptive and costly mercury spill will be reduced or eliminated. In addition, students and staff may carry the mercury elimination message into their communities, thus further reducing the risk of future releases of mercury to the environment.

Project Milestones:**Dates:**

Selection of Contractors	08/2000
Preparation of promotional materials	09/2000
Distribution of promotional materials	09/2000
Completion of mercury collection	11/2000
Distribution of reward vouchers	12/2000
Payment of vouchers	03/2001
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Project End	04/2001

☒ Project Addresses Environmental Justice

If So, Description of How:

The school for pilot testing of this program will be Washington High School in Milwaukee, which has a predominately minority, low income student body.

The largest participating school system will be the Milwaukee Public Schools, which has a predominately minority, low income student body.

Reducing the amount of mercury that can enter the aquatic environment will protect low income, minority fishers who consume larger amountst of locally-caught sport fish than other populations.

☒ Project Addresses Education/Outreach

If So, Description of How:

The District will contact school boards, principals, and science teachers by mail. The materials will offer teacher training regarding mercury using the curriculum package "Mercury in Your Community and the Environment," which was developed by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and is now available from GLNPO as well. The authors of the curriculum package will conduct the training.

Project Budget:

	Federal Share Requested (\$)	Applicant's Share (\$)
Personnel:	337	2,143
Fringe:	202	0
Travel:	0	0
Equipment:	0	0
Supplies:	14,224	0
Contracts:	6,281	0
Construction:	0	0
Other:	816	0
Total Direct Costs:	21,860	2,143
Indirect Costs:	0	0
Total:	21,860	2,143
Projected Income:	0	0

Funding by Other Organizations (Names, Amounts, Description of Commitments):

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources \$2,307 For costs associated with recycling or disposal of mercury

Description of Collaboration/Community Based Support:

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Milwaukee Public Schools
Citizens for a Better Environment
United Water
Solid & Hazardous Waste Education Center